The University of Alberta
Orchestral Winds and Percussion
"Octets and the Common Man"
Angela Schroeder, Conductor

Thursday, November 22, 2007
at 8:00 pm

Arts Building
University of Alberta

Program

DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC

Program

Fanfare for the Common Man (1942) — Aaron Copland (1990-1990)

Octet Op. 216 (1892) — Carl Reinecke (1824-1910)

I. Allegro moderato
II. Scherzo
III. Adagio ma non troppo
V. Finale

Intermission

Octet for Wind Instruments (1923/rev.1952) — Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

I. Sinfonia
II. Tema con Variazioni
III. Finale

Wind Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 103 (1792) — Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Menuetto; Trio
IV. Finale

Program Notes

Aaron Copland (1990-1990) once said that it was his good fortune that he was "twenty in the twenties." It was America's good luck, too, for historically he was the right man at the right time. When he was growing up, American music had no internationally recognized voice of its own. His destiny was to supply one. Although he was the son of Jewish immigrants, the music he wrote - with its clear and clean open harmonies and frequent folk-like melodies - came to be regarded as the most representative echo of the American spirit. There is a certain irony in this fact, since Copland began his composing career as a jarring modernist.

After premiering Copland's *Organ Symphony* in 1925, conductor Walter Damrosch remarked, "... when the gifted young American who wrote this symphony can compose at the age of twenty-three a work like this one -- it seems evident that in five years more he will be ready to commit murder!" While it is true that a number of his early scores were brash and dissonant, in mid-career he wrote a string of works of such immediacy and sophisticated simplicity that the world recognized and cheered them not only as American, but as quintessentially Copland-esque.

These included the ballets *Billy the Kid* and *Rodeo* as well as the modern dance piece *Appalachian Spring.* There was also *Lincoln Portrait* for narrator and orchestra, *An Outdoor Overture* and, above all, the majestic *Third Symphony,* a work which grew out of Copland's rousing *Fanfare for the Common Man.* Perhaps because Copland summed up so well so many strands of the experience of being an American, he can be regarded as the American musical voice, even over the more popular, but localized, New York jazz refrains of George Gershwin and the more austere, original New England sounds of Charles Ives. "He is the best we have, you know," Leonard Bernstein once said, and considering how closely tied together were their lives and careers it is touching that they died only two months apart. Copland, after all, was the first to recognize Bernstein's gifts as a composer and encourage him, and few composers have had a more loyal and dedicated advocate than Bernstein the conductor.

Born in Brooklyn on November 14, 1900, the youngest of five children, his early music training came from an older sister Laurine. He later went abroad to complete his musical education at a new conservatory for American musicians established at Fontainebleau, near Paris - a further irony surrounding the work of this maker of classic American sounds. But it was a measure of Copland's personality and the vigor of what he had to express that he remained staunchly his own man despite the European influences he came in contact with.

Today, we remember Copland as more than just an original, skillful maker of music. He became a symbol of what could be attained as a serious musician in this land. He was an articulate spokesman on behalf of America's music and its musicians, a teacher, critic, conductor, and writer whose books and articles helped to explain to a wide public both old and new music.

Although he stopped composing after 1970, he remained a powerful influence and a mentor for young composers and was the recipient of most of the honors this country can bestow, from the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Kennedy Center Honors to a Pulitzer Prize and an Oscar. However, he once told his close friend, playwright Harold Clurman, that he actually had only one ambition -- "I want to be remembered." It was an ambition he achieved many times over.

Fanfare for the Common Man (1942) was written on the request of conductor Eugene Goosens. In his autobiography, Copland wrote of the request:

Goossens, conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, had written to me at the end of August about an idea he wanted to put into action for the 1942-43 concert season. During World War I he had asked British composers for a fanfare to begin each orchestral concert. It had been so successful that he thought to repeat the procedure in World War II with American composers.

A total of eighteen fanfares were written at Goossens' behest, but Copland's is the only one which remains in the standard repertoire. Goosens had suggested titles such as *Fanfare for Soldiers*, or sailors or airmen, and he wrote that "[i]t is my idea to make these fanfares stirring and significant contributions to the war effort...." Copland considered several titles including *Fanfare for a Solemn Ceremony* and *Fanfare for Four Freedoms*; to Goossens' surprise, however, Copland titled the piece *Fanfare for the Common Man*. Goossen wrote "Its title is as original as its music, and I think it is so telling that it deserves a special occasion for its performance. If it is agreeable to you, we will premiere it 12 March 1943 at income tax time". Copland's reply was "I [am] all for honoring the common man at income tax time". The fanfare was also used as the main theme of the fourth movement of Copland's *Third Symphony*..

Carl Reinecke (1824-1910) is one of the most influential and versatile musicians of his time. Known most commonly for writing cadenzas for the concertos of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, he was a brilliant pianist who was touring as early as age eleven. During a stay in Leopzig, he was fortunate to have studied with Mendelssohn and Schumann. In 1846, Reinecke was appointed court pianist to Christian VIII in Denmark, where he stayed for two years. He enjoyed stays in Paris and Cologne before becoming Music Director at Barmen in 1854. In 1860, Reinecke became conductor of the famous Leipzig Gewandhaus, where he stayed for the next thirty-five years of his life. He was also appointed professor of composition and piano at the Conservatory, where many of his pupils went on to great acclaim, including Greig and Weingartner. He never stopped performing as a pianist, and was regarded as one of the fore-most interpreters of the music of Mozart at the time. His compositions include concertos, a symphony, instrumental sonatas, and chamber works such as the *Sextet for Winds in Bb, Op. 27,* as well as the *Octet Op. 216.*

The ***Octet Op. 216*** is a four-movement work that is a gem in the repertoire for chamber winds. It has an elegance and charm that is reminiscent of the classical period style of Haydn and Mozart, but combined with the passionate harmonies and emotional content of the romantic period that surrounded him throughout his life. The first movement is in Sonata form, presenting a simple yet jaunty theme

in the opening, contrasted by a more lyrical and wistful second theme. The second movement, as Scherzo and Trio, contrasts a playfully repetitive motive with a song-like melody. In the Adagio ma non troppo, the romantic influence is indulged in a gently impassioned tune that plays itself into a rather virtuosic line in the flute. This virtuosity carries into the Finale, where the flute continues to be featured in a technical display of gracefully weaving lines and figures. Reinecke captures the character of all the instruments and combines them to create a brilliant closing to this magnificent work.

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) was born at Oranienbaum near St. Petersburg, Russia. He finished a university law course before he made the decision to become a musician. By this time he was a good amateur pianist, an occasional professional accompanist, an enthusiastic reader of avant-garde scores from France and Germany, and a connoisseur of Italian, French, and Russian opera.

Stravinsky became an apprentice to the elder Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. He did not enter classes at the conservatory where Rimsky Korsakov taught, but worked privately at his home. For the sake of learning the most advanced craftsmanship, Stravinsky hid his independent taste, confident that he could exercise it later. His *Symphony in E-flat* , *Pastorale*, and *Fireworks* demonstrate this. Stravinsky also wrote a funeral dirge (a dark, moody piece) for Rimsky-Korsakov, which he later recalled as the best of his early works. It was not published, and the manuscript was lost.

The great impresario Sergei Diaghilev heard Stravinsky's works in St. Petersburg and invited him to go to Paris, France, to write orchestral arrangements of Chopin's (1810–1849) works for ballets that he was producing. Each of these ballets scandalized the first audiences. However, the ballets were unique and exciting, and quickly became classics in the repertoire. The three ballets—*Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911), and *The Rite of Spring* (1912–1913)—together made Stravinsky's influence on all the arts enormous. They established him as a leader of a heroic musical generation alongside many of his older compositional mentors.

World War I prevented Stravinsky from writing more for Diaghilev's company. The Russian Revolution prevented Stravinsky from returning home from Paris. During the war he lived in Switzerland, where he collaborated with the poet C. F. Ramuz on a series of works based on folklore, including *The Soldier's Tale* (1918). This work deeply influenced Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956), Jean Cocteau (1889–1963), and other dramatists of the 1920s. The death of Diaghilev in 1929 marked the end of a social focus for much of Stravinsky's work. Though Stravinsky became a French citizen in 1934, he was not able to win in France the recognition and security he needed.

When Stravinsky settled in the United States in 1939, he renewed his interest in popular music. He composed several short pieces, including *Ebony Concerto* for Woody Herman's band (performed most notably by Benny Goodman). His arrangement of the "Star-Spangled Banner" (1944) was too severe to become a favorite. Several projects for film music were begun, though none was completed. A collaboration happier even than that with Diaghilev developed with the New York City Ballet under choreographer George Balanchine. The music

included some of Stravinsky's most melodious ideas. During the 1950s Stravinsky studied the music of Anton Webern and gradually absorbed the new elements of serial music into his own still evolving, still very individual, style. Stravinsky's works of the 1960s continued to demonstrate complex rhythms and sounds, as well as fascinating harmony and counterpoint.

Stravinsky died on April 6, 1971, in New York City and was buried in Venice. His approach to musical composition was one of constant renewal. Rhythm was the most striking ingredient, and his novel rhythms were most widely imitated. His instrumentation and his ways of writing for voices were also distinctive and influential. His harmonies and forms were more elusive However, he recognized melody as the "most essential" element.

The ***Octet for Wind Instruments*** (1923/rev.1952) was one of many of Stravinsky's works written in the neo-classical style. Scored for flute, clarinet, two bassoons, two trumpets in A and C, and tenor and bass trombones, the Octet reflected Stravinsky's general reduction in instrumental forces during and after the First World War. Although the war and its dismal aftermath necessitated economical scoring, these events do not explain the composer's intriguing choice of instruments. The following story that is told by Stravinsky is from the series of interviews published by Robert Craft. Although these stories are undoubtedly described by Stravinsky, many scholars have disputed over their accuracy.

> The octet began with a dream. I found myself (in my dream state) in a small room surrounded by a small number of instrumentalists who were playing some very agreeable music. I did not recognize the music they played, and I could not recall any of it the next day, but I do remember my curiosity (in the dream) to know how many musicians played. I remember that after I had counted them to the number eight, I looked again and saw that they were playing bassoons, trombones, trumpets, a flute and a clarinet. I awoke from this little dream concert in a state of delight, and the next morning, I began to compose the Octet, a piece I had not so much as thought of the day before. The Octet was quickly composed. The first movement came first and then the waltz in the second movement. After writing the waltz, I realized that it would be a very good theme for variations. I then wrote the "ribbons of scales" variation as a prelude introduction to each of the other variations. The final variation, the fugato, is the culmination of everything I had attempted to do in the movement, and it is certainly the most interesting episode in the whole octet. The point of the fugato is that the theme is played in rotation by the instrument pairs. The third movement grew out of the fugato and was intended as a contrast to the high tension point of the whole piece. Perhaps I had Bach's *Two Part Inventions* in mind while composing this movement.
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> from *Conversations with Stravinsky*, Volume IV

It seems that Stravinsky was striving for an extreme (and un-Romantic) clarity of timbre and texture. As he explained in his 1924 article, "Some Ideas About my Octour [Octet]": "Wind instruments seem to me to be more apt to render a certain rigidity of the form I had in mind than other instruments -- the stringed instruments, for example, which are less cold and more vague." Stravinsky further outlined his neo-Classical credo by stressing that the Octet "is not an 'emotive' work, but a musical composition based on elements which are sufficient in themselves." Accordingly, he chose classical forms commonly associated with absolute music: sonata form for the first movement, theme and variations (incorporating a fugue) for the second, and a rondo finale.

The work was dedicated secretly to Vera Soudeikine (born de Bosset), whom Stravinsky had met in 1920, and with whom he had fallen in love and eventually married. Stravinsky conducted the first performance of the piece on October 18, 1923, the first time the composer had introduced one of his own works.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) is well known as the pivotal composer of the late classical period. He began his musical studies as a child, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather who both served as court musicians in Bonn. Beethoven himself began working for the court as early as age twelve, performing on piano, organ, violin and viola, as well as wrting a great deal of music as well. Under the patronage of elector Maximillian Franz, Beethoven was avle to develop as a composer and wrote several works during his time in Bonn. He became the financial supporter of his family, and took care of his brothers and ailing father. At the age of twenty-two, Beethoven decided to leave Bonn to study in Vienna, where he would live the rest of his life.

While in Vienna, he began taking lessons with Franz Joseph Haydn, though the lessons would not last long. Beethoven grew impatient with the formality of Haydn's teaching, and he discontinued his work with the composer. Beethoven achieved great success as a pianist throughout Vienna, and his compositions grew in popularity. However, just as his career was beginning to grow, Beethoven recognized the earliest signs of the deafness that would change his life. He went on to compose symphonies, operas, chamer music and solo piano music in a style unlike anyone before or after him. This style has been defined as the turning point in classical music, leading toward a new genre of impassioned and expressive music that is now known as the romantic period. By putting his emotions into his compositions, Beethoven allows the listner and the performer to become intimately involved with his struggle to express himself. Because his deafness became so pronounced, Beethoven himself did not hear the music that he wrote in his later years. Many of these works are now a part of the standard works of soloists, chamber musicians and orchestras worldwide.

The ***Wind Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 103*** was written while the composer was still living in Bonn, prior to his move to Vienna. It is presumed that he wrote the music as entertainment for the court of Maximilian Franz, who enjoyed listening to a small "band" consisiting of pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns while he ate. Not unlike the wind serenades of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the *Octet* was not considered serious music at the time, as its function was very utilitarian. Being only twenty years old and still very diligent in his compositional practices, the *Octet* reflects many of the classical traditions of composition. The four-movement form of the work was standard at the time, and the structure of each movement was very reflective of other pieces writeen during that time. His only other work for this combination of instruments is the *Rondino in E-flat*, which is thought to have been conceived as an additional movement for the *Octet*. However, he chose not to include it, allowing it to stand alone in its own right. Beethoven brought the music for the *Octet* with him to Vienna, where he later revised and edited the work. In 1795, he re-orchestrated the work for string quartet, which would become the *String Quintet in E-flat, Op. 4*.

The first movement of the *Octet* – Allegro – is motivically driven. There is no real hint of a "tune", but rather fragments of different themes that are interrupted and manipulated amongst each other. The second movement, Andante, is the opposite; Beethoven writes a lyrical and somewhat haunting melody that is introduced by the oboe and later taken over by the bassoon and clarinet. In the third movement we catch a glimpse of the Beethovenian style that would later become a trademark of his writing. Thought entitled *Menuet and Trio*, as was proper for third movements to be, this movement is undeniable a scherzo – a lively and playful musical joke. Beethoven would go on to use scherzo in place of the traditional Menuet and Trio in many of his future works. The last movement is a light-hearted Finale in which there exists a somewhat sarcastic mocking of the theme between the instruments. The overall feeling of the work is one of joy and youthfulness, laughter and excitement.

Upcoming Events

November
23 Friday, 8:00 pm
Music at Convocation Hall II
7:15 Pre-Concert Introduction by **Dr Michael Roeder**
Jasmine Lin, violin
Marina Hoover, cello
Patricia Tao, piano
Brahms Night: Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano, Op 100; Sonata in F Major for Cello and Piano, Op. 99; Trio in B Major, Op. 8
Admission: $20/adult, $15/senior, $10/student. Advance tickets are available exclusively at TIX on the Square, 420-1757

24 Saturday, 8:00 pm
World Music Sampler
Presented by the Canadian Centre for Ethnomusicology
Free admission
For more information call 492-0274

25 Sunday, 3:00 pm
Music at Convocation Hall I
2:15 pm Pre-Concert Introduction by **Dr David Cook**
Steven Bryant, violin
Dianne New, violin
Sue Jane Bryant, viola
Tanya Prochazka, cello
Janet Scott Hoyt, piano
Sallinen *Some Aspects's of Hintrik's Funeral March, Op.*19 (String Quartet No. 3); Beethoven *String Quartet in E flat major, Op.127*; Schnittke *Minuet for String Trio; Piano Quartet;* Brahms *Quintet in F Minor, Op.34 for String Quartet & Piano*
Admission: $20/adult, $15/senior, $10/student
Advance tickets are available at TIX on the Square, 420-1757

30 Friday, 8:00 pm
University of Alberta Concert Choir
Evelyn Pfeifer, Conductor
featuring Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, Brahms's *Weltliche Gesänge, Op 42*, and works by Hindemith, Lundvik, Sirett and Daley
Admission: $15/adult, $10/stud/sen
Advance tickets are available at TIX on the Square, 420-1757

December
2 Sunday, 3:00 pm
University of Alberta Concert Band
Wendy Grasdahl, Conductor
Admission: $15/adult, $10/stud/sen
Advance tickets are available at TIX on the Square, 420-1757

2 Sunday, 8:00 pm *DATE CHANGE*
Happnin'
University of Alberta Jazz Choir
John McMillan, Conductor
Music by the New York Voices, Gavin DeGraw, Beady Belle, Paul Simon, and more!
Admission: $15/adult, $10/stud/sen
Advance tickets are available at TIX on the Square, 420-1757

3 Monday, 12:00 pm
Music at Noon, Convocation Hall
Student Recital Series
Featuring students from the Department of Music
Free admission

3 Monday, 7:30 pm
Grant MacEwan College and University of Alberta Jazz Bands
Raymond Baril and Tom Dust, Directors
An evening of big band music
For ticket information, contact Grant MacEwan College, 497-4436

department of Music

Unless otherwise indicated Convocation Hall, Arts Building
Please note: All concerts and events are subject to change without notice. Please visit our Website: *www.ualberta.ca/music* or call 492-0601 to confirm concerts (after office hours a recorded message will inform you of any changes to our schedule).